

# **Georgia Institute of Technology**

## **Spring 2010 Commencement Address**

### **G.P. “Bud” Peterson, President**

#### **May 7, 2010**

#### **Saturday, May 8, morning ceremony**

*More than 2,800 Georgia Tech graduates were awarded degrees in three ceremonies held May 7-8, 2010 in Alexander Memorial Coliseum. Dr. Peterson's comments for the morning ceremony on May 8 are included below.*

Graduates, members of the faculty and staff, distinguished guests, families and friends: it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 236th commencement exercises here at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

This weekend we are awarding 2,800 degrees. While I am fairly confident that some of you wondered if this day would ever come, it is finally here. You have worked hard, and today you are earning a graduate degree from one of the nation's top ten public universities, and one that just two weeks ago was invited to join the prestigious Association of American Universities.

As is the case for the success of our Institute, success in life is seldom a one-person effort. As we celebrate the successful conclusion of one chapter of your lifelong education, it is important to acknowledge that you have not done it alone.

Cheering you on, at least in spirit, have been your parents, and for some, spouses, and for almost all, a network of other family members and friends. For some parents here today, this is not your first Georgia Tech graduation ceremony. If you are a proud alum and have a student graduating, or if you have had more than one Georgia Tech graduate through the years, please stand and wave. Thank you.

At this time, I would like to introduce several members of the stage party and will ask that they stand when I call their name.

- Dr. Steve Cross, Executive Vice President for Research
- Dr. William Schafer, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dr. Catherine Murray-Rust, Dean and Director of Libraries
- Mr. Barrett Carson, Vice President for Development
- Beki Grinter, Associate Dean, Computing
- Mr. John Stein, Dean of Students
- Dr. Charles Liotta, 2010 Distinguished Professor, and mace bearer

Also with us today are members of the faculty who have guided and mentored these students, sharing with them their time, their wisdom, and their expertise, and challenging them in order to help each and every one reach their fullest potential and achieve this important milestone. Would you please stand so that our graduates and their families can join me in thanking you also?

This is a momentous day for you as graduates, and for your family and friends who are sharing in the celebration of your accomplishments. You will forever be linked to this great university, and you

have worked very hard to earn your degree from one of the best institutions in the nation, and in many areas, the world.

We can all be proud of Georgia Tech's reputation, with outstanding programs in engineering, architecture, computing, liberal arts, management, and the sciences. Tech's research program is now a half-billion dollar enterprise, and is emerging as a nationally and internationally recognized leader in interdisciplinary fields that range from nanotechnology and nanomedicine to energy and high-powered computing. This fall we welcomed our largest, best qualified and most diverse freshman class to Tech's campus. And, for the first time in our history, we have more than 20,000 students. Word is getting out that this is the best place to be to prepare for the future.

Earlier this week I gave the commencement address at Gainesville State College. I shared something with those graduates that I will share with you. They have different degree programs, but the principle is still the same. You should be proud of your accomplishments, but before you decide that you're finished with your education, you need to know that there are some forces in play today that are requiring college graduates, regardless of their degree, to commit to lifetime learning. In our rapidly changing world, a bachelor's, master's, or PhD may no longer be sufficient to provide the education you will need for your entire career or your lifetime. Those forces include the rapid changes in technology, in our global environment, and in career trends, along with an increased focus on interdisciplinary approaches to identifying and solving problems.

This past Monday, I returned from a trip to China to meet with leaders at Peking University in Beijing and Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Shanghai. Georgia Tech has partnership programs with both of these prestigious universities. In just a few short years, China will be the largest English-speaking country in the world. If you are one in a million in China, there are 1,300 people like you. China has hundreds of universities with more than 50,000 students each. Both Peking University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University are outstanding, and in fact, PKU is known as the Harvard of China.

Our first joint venture at Peking University was biomedical engineering, a joint program between the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering at Georgia Tech and Emory University. We are creating partnerships and what we believe will be the world's best international program in biomedical engineering. Just 13 years ago, neither institution even had a biomedical engineering program; yet today, our joint program is ranked among the top two or three in the country. Researchers in our joint laboratories are developing gene prediction protocols, cancer detection and prevention methodologies, and cardiac regeneration and biomedical imaging systems that will transform the way we think about treatment and health care. And many of you will be working with these technologies, implementing them and ensuring that they do what they were intended to do.

As I look out at all of you today, I see a group that is well prepared for a life of accomplishment and contribution, in an ever-changing world — not because you have learned everything in college that will be required of you — but because your Georgia Tech education is designed to provide you with a solid foundation on which you can build throughout your lifetime as you learn and grow, to prepare you to work collaboratively to identify challenges and create solutions, and to be a leader in business, industry, government, and the communities where you live and work.

Many of the problems you will be called on to solve haven't yet been identified, yet you will help invent the technologies to solve them. You are prepared to not only face the future, but also to design and create it. We're looking to you for great things.

## Introduction of Brook Byers and presentation of honorary degree from Georgia Tech

This morning we are welcoming back to Georgia Tech one of our own, alumnus Brook Byers. Mr. Byers grew up in Atlanta and earned his bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Georgia Tech in 1968. He then went on to earn his MBA from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business in 1970. Brook would you please join me at the podium?

Brook Byers has been an active venture capital investor and company builder since 1972. It is incredible to note that he has been personally involved in building more than 50 new technology-based ventures, more than half of which have already become public companies. He has served on over 30 boards of directors.

Brook is a full-time Managing Partner of the famed venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins, Caufield & Byers in Menlo Park, California, which he co-founded 32 years ago. KPCB has helped entrepreneurs start and build more than 400 companies that created more than 400,000 jobs. Included among these companies are Genentech, Amazon, Google, Intuit, Bloom Energy, Electronic Arts, and Zynga. In addition, he co-founded, as CEO, four biotech companies whose products have helped millions of patients.

Brook Byers has been honored by numerous organizations, including being elected last year as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is loyal to Georgia Tech and given back to the Institute in numerous ways, including serving on the Georgia Tech Advisory Board.

He co-founded the startup incubator at Tech, and helped start innovative programs such as the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering at Georgia Tech and Emory University, now partnering with Peking University as I mentioned earlier, and the new Byers Institute for Sustainable Systems on campus here.

Brook, in recognition of your many accomplishments, it is my great honor to present to you an honorary Doctorate degree, which reads: "To all whom these presents may come, greetings: Whereas Brook H. Byers created the first Life Sciences group in the venture capital profession, received the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Awards from the National Venture Capital Association, and made a transformational gift to Georgia Tech to endow the Brook Byers Institute for Sustainable Systems, now, therefore, we, under the authority vested in us, do hereby confer the degree of Honorary Doctor of Philosophy with all the rights, privileges, and honors thereunto appertaining."

**[View a video of Brook H. Byers' commencement address](#)**